

# Australian Journal of Teacher Education

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Volume 21 | Issue 1

Article 4

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11-1-1996

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### Recommended Citation

Hogan, C., & Down, B. (1996). Interrupting the institutional, narrative on teacher training: The potential of school-based teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 21(1).  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.1996v21n1.4>

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## **INTERRUPTING THE INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVE ON TEACHER TRAINING: THE POTENTIAL OF SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION**

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Real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterised by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth (Fullan, 1991, p.32).

### **Introduction**

Currently, teacher education is at the crossroads. Stimulated by a plethora of government reports and inquiries there are cries for reform, restructuring and change. As teacher educators we have grappled with the complexities, contradictions and tensions emanating from these reform efforts on two fronts. At the institutional level, we have suffered the alienating consequences of restructuring through budget cuts, staff sackings, 'efficiencies', and the casualisation of academic work. At the collegial level, we have struggled to make sense of the "teacher training business" and what it means to be a teacher and teacher educator in this increasingly hostile environment (Bullough & Gitlin, 1994; Knight, Bartlett & McWilliam, 1993).

Against this background, we set out to do a number of things in this paper. Firstly, we want to share our own experiences, visions, hopes, frustrations and strategies as we engage in one small educational reform project in teacher education. Secondly, we want to explain these experiences in relation to two competing and contradictory discourses - the dominant institutional narrative on teacher training versus the emerging body of critical discourses which value diversity, difference, collaboration, democratic decision-making, critique and empowerment. Thirdly, we want to talk about the challenges that people take on in bringing about institutional change. Finally, we want to draw on the lived experience and voices of the participants involved to illustrate the complexities and tensions associated with the process of educational change.

### **The problem**

One of us shared an extract from her journal which read in part:

*I was reading through some of my written feedback to a prac student today and I thought 'oh no, I sound like the Prac Handbook!' The language was all stodgy and technical - though there were occasional bits of 'good writing' where I felt I said something real about the children, the work or what the student was doing.*

The journal went on to describe how she really wanted to write:

*... a more 'personal' kind of discourse that tries to describe the classroom, its atmosphere, the tenor and tensions of the daily life of its characters - the feelings of children and teacher. And I'd like to compare the students' stories with mine.*

The above story is a powerful reminder that as teacher educators we spend a great deal of our time "living out someone else's theory" (Kemmis, 1995). The words of Clandinin sound very familiar to us when she writes "quietly and cautiously, we had begun to question the lived story of teacher education, a story rooted in long institutional narratives of university-professional relationships". Like Clandinin we started to "feel uncomfortable with the experiences our institution constructed for us". The ideas of expert-novice, prescriptions for "right practice" and generic rules that could be applied in any situation conflicted with our own insights about what it meant to be a teacher and teacher educator in the 1990s (1993, p.3).

The problem of finding a voice is just one aspect of a set of emerging critical discourses on teacher education and on education generally; discourses which value diversity and difference, which emphasise processes that are democratic, collaborative and negotiated and which affirm a new respect for the work of teachers as knowing subjects in real educational contexts (Schon, 1983; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Smyth, 1987, 1991, 1995; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Giroux, 1988; Ginsburg, 1988; Tripp, 1993; & Clandinin, et al., 1993).

Given the fundamental philosophical and political differences between the conservative institutional narrative on teacher training and the emerging critical discourses, any attempt at genuine reform of teacher education will inevitably produce conflict and resistance at all

levels. In this paper, we want to talk about our experience in attempting to re-write one aspect of teacher education, through a collaborative school-based program.

## **The Project**

Recent years have seen growing criticism of teacher education in America, Britain and now Australia. School-Based Teacher Education (SBTE) has gained momentum as a more desirable model of teacher education (Gore, 1995). The *Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science* (DEET, 1989), the *Ebbeck Report* (1990), *Teacher Quality* (schools Council, 1989), *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade* (Schools Council, 1990), and the more recent Ministerial Statement *Teaching Counts* (1993) all argue that effective teacher education courses depend on developing a stronger partnership between universities and schools.

Persuaded by these arguments the staff of the Faculty of Education at Edith Cowan University's regional campus (Bunbury) initiated an alternative program for student teachers in their final year of preparation. This involved working with teachers from several local primary schools to develop a collaborative, school-based teacher education program. The project placed a group of student teachers in schools for a longer period of time than existing practice, and sought to deliver their coursework largely in the school setting, addressing real educational problems in partnership with cooperating teachers and university staff.

The broad aims of the initiative were stated as follows:

- to provide students with a more authentic teaching experience;
- to better integrate theory and practice through assignment tasks that grow out of classroom needs and issues;
- to improve and strengthen relationships between participants, especially partnerships between students, cooperating teachers and academics;
- to develop students' understanding of the school culture;
- to provide time and opportunities for students to develop professional habits of collaboration, reflection and critique.

In agreeing to engage in the SBTE project, participants either consciously or unconsciously entered into the debate about the nature of pre-service teacher education and especially about the role of field experience within that preparation and the broader issue of teacher professional development.

### **Competing discourses on teacher development**

As teacher educators we find ourselves caught between two competing and contradictory tendencies in teacher education. On the one hand, the move towards SBTE presents many positive moments and possibilities, offering university staff and teachers working in collaboration the opportunity to bring about fundamental change to both teacher education and importantly, classroom practices. On the other hand, the shift to SBTE raises a number of negative concerns in relation to the commitment of both state and federal governments to the instrumental notion of training, which emphasises a technical or competencies - based approach to teaching practice.

From our perspective, participating in the SBTE project presented an opportunity to shape our own narrative of teacher education rather than living out the theories of others. As a group of teacher educators working in a collaborative manner we wanted to take control of our program, ensuring that it met the needs of all partners and at the same time, encapsulated the principles which guide our work, that is, collaboration, participatory democracy, social justice, and reflective practice.

We began this project intending simply to contrast the SBTE model with existing competency-based models of teacher preparation. One of our most important discoveries has been that there is no model as such for SBTE: the experience is invented anew in each case as students, teachers and university staff negotiate, redefine, and develop strategies to address problems that arise out of each particular situation. We found that everything now had to be negotiated, and while this was often exhausting and frustrating, all participants were excited by its positive and transformative potential.

Interestingly, we found that traditional teacher education categories based on evaluating and grading student competencies were no longer the central issue: almost all of our time and

energy went into negotiating new relationships, rethinking the nature of teachers' work, and challenging familiar ways of seeing the process of educational change. We discovered that even small-scale attempts at educational change can prove difficult and complex, as traditional school and university cultures work powerfully in both overt and covert ways to suppress alternative approaches to teacher education. Chadbourne draws attention to the difficulty of implementing reform in teacher education when he concludes:

More generally, throughout Australia, experiments in teacher education tend to come and go while traditional on-campus courses prove remarkably resilient, despite numerous official inquiries and progressive policy documents (Chadbourne, 1995, p.225).

So why is it that teacher education is so resistant to change? The answer to this question has preoccupied our thinking over the past three years. Our experience of SBTE tells us that the hegemony of institutional narratives on teachers' work is far more enduring and powerful than we had anticipated. In searching for a way forward, we started to think about the nature of the contradictory discourses that influenced our working relationships with participating students and teachers.

Following Schon (1983) and at the risk of oversimplification (Grundy & Hatton, 1995), we distinguished between the conservative discourse of technocratic rationality and the emerging body of critical discourses which emphasises the radical and transformative potential of teacher education. The following table summarises the major features of each perspective:

### **Competing Discourses on Teacher Education**

<b>The discourse of technical rationality</b>	<b>Emerging critical discourses</b>
1) Monolithic - assumes that there is a one best system.	1) Local - acknowledges the value of diversity and difference.
2) Top-down - functions in a hierarchical fashion.	2) Democratic - encourages processes that are participatory and collaborative.
3) Training - emphasises the technical (practical) aspects of teaching.	3) Educative - emphasises the social, political and moral dimensions of teaching.
4) Conservative - perpetuates the status quo.	4) Transformative - challenges the status quo.
5) Competencies - assumes that teaching involves the mastery of a pre-determined set of generic skills.	5) Lived experience - highlights the personal and contextual nature of teachers' work.

6) Individualistic - perpetuates an isolated and competitive work culture .	6) Collaborative - encourages practices that are negotiated and collaborative.
7) Pre-packaged - reinforces a non-critical banking approach to teaching and learning.	7) Reflective - develops educational processes that are personal, reflective and socially critical.
8) Silence - silences teacher voice.	8) Voice - encourages teacher voice.
9) Neutrality - advocates the view that teaching is a politically neutral activity.	9) Political - acknowledges that teaching is an ideological and contested activity.
10) Practicality - perpetuates the artificial division between theory and practice.	10) Praxis - involves reflecting on practice to change it.
11) A historical - fails to acknowledge the historical and contextual nature of social reality.	11) Historical - acknowledges that education reflects particular social and historical circumstances.
12) Positivist - assumes that the 'facts' are out there waiting to be discovered.	12) Interpretative - believes that educational research is socially constructed and interpreted.

Locating our work within these two competing discourses enabled us to clarify the tensions and contradictions that confronted us on a daily basis. It allowed us to better understand the issues, dilemmas and problems which emerged during the SBTE project. In the remainder of the paper we want to organise our discussion around four major themes that emerged during the SBTE project: the notion of teacher education as training; the issue of changing power relationships; the problem of individualism; and the question of theorising practice. It is to these matters that we shall now turn.

### **Teacher education as 'training'**

There is a comfortable certainty about traditional approaches to teacher education. Generally conceived as a one best model they seek to inculcate in the trainees the knowledge, skills and values deemed appropriate for the profession, frequently enshrining these in teaching skills manuals or checklists. Such approaches measure all students in time and place against a predetermined set of teaching skills divorced from broader educational aims and purposes. Beyer explains the features and consequences of this technical approach to teacher education:

Within this perspective, techniques of teaching often become ends in themselves rather than a means toward some articulated, reasoned educational purpose. An ameliorative perspective is thus advanced that limits students' perceptions and actions. Consequently, student teachers tend to accept the practices they observe in their field placements as the upper and outer limits of what is possible. ... There seems to be little understanding, in such dominant technical approaches to teacher

training, of the school itself, and almost no searching for alternatives to what is taken to be natural within those worlds (1987, p.21).

This particular orientation assumes that 'good' teacher preparation is mainly a matter of developing better teaching methods and techniques. It emphasises competency-based teacher education, models of classroom management, improved instructional techniques, cooperative learning strategies, systems management approaches to curriculum development and evaluation and behaviourist psychology (Beyer 1987, p.23). According to Bullough and Gitlin, "these assumptions are fundamentally conservative, emphasising fitting into current institutional patterns and practices rather than thinking about and criticising them" (1994, p.70).

Both personally and professionally we felt uncomfortable with the dominant technical approach to teacher education. The SBTE project encouraged us to rethink our views about the nature of teachers' work, the theories informing our practices and the nature of our relationship with students and teachers. In the process we found ourselves constrained in a myriad of ways by an institutional culture, at both the university and school levels, that seemed more concerned with reinforcing historically constructed notions of teacher training. In contrast, we were attracted to the emerging critical discourses on teacher education which emphasised the notions of flexibility, diversity, responsiveness, collaboration, critique, and transformation. In our view, these ideas offered a more purposeful way of thinking about our work, and at the same time responding to the complex demands placed on teachers in the 1990s. Beyer captures the spirit of this socially critical approach to teacher education in the following manner:

A rejection of technological rationality thus carries with it both a humanizing and democratising of knowledge and an individual and communal responsibility for action. In addition, a new approach to understanding must recognise the ways in which political, social, and ideological contexts are enmeshed with knowledge and action. Instead of pursuing knowledge 'for its sake', or for the cultivation of sensitivity, task, or cognitive discrimination it can encourage, it becomes valued for the actions and involvements it makes possible (1987, p.29).



Armed with these theoretical insights we were in a much better position to understand the tensions that arose during the SBTE project. Nowhere were these competing perspectives more apparent than in the contested area of student assessment. In evaluating students participating in the SBTE project there was strong institutional pressure to use the skills checklists developed for use in earlier short-term practice. Difficulties arose for two important reasons: firstly, such checklists are geared to assessing individual performance rather than building collaborative relationships. Secondly, the use of external, skills-based assessment was disempowering for a group of students who in other respects were involved in responsible decision-making and self-directed learning. As one supervisor reflected in her journal:

[Competency-based assessment] seems to defeat the purpose of the whole enterprise which is complex, developmental and embedded in a particular context - slapping on a grade of "O" or "HC" is ridiculous but it is so important to students and employers.

In rejecting the discourse of technical rationality and its narrow focus on 'the competent teacher' we were keenly aware of the need to develop assessment processes which were negotiated, collaborative, contextual and acknowledged the complexity of teaching and learning. Conventional approaches to grading tended to distort and constrain our reform efforts.

### **Changing power relations**

Traditionally, teaching practice has involved a fairly informal and tolerant relationship between universities and schools. Both parties used each other for their own purposes, but it was commonly recognised that the university held the real responsibility for determining the shape of the practicum experience and for certifying graduates as competent practitioners. Grenfell is one writer who identifies the broader implications of SBTE for universities and schools :

As teachers become more empowered, the current arrangements whereby the university is seen as the senior partner with the schools continuing to look to them for guidance, assistance and support will change substantially. Schools will not

remain docile and compliant and the relationship of tutelage must necessarily change to one of equality, mutuality and reciprocity (Grenfell, 1992, p.18).

Early in the SBTE project we realised that traditional hierarchical power relations between the university and school were inappropriate. We needed to incorporate more democratic and participatory ways of working across and within educational institutions. While such ideals are attractive, in practice it was very difficult for all participants to move out of their accustomed roles and to become comfortable with less prescriptive and more flexible working relationships. For some teachers there was a perception that working with preservice teachers was not a part of their job; for some university lecturers there was a fear that SBTE might threaten their job security while others philosophically disagreed with moves toward SBTE; for student teachers concern centred on a range of matters including lack of flexibility in their time-table, the workload, fear of the unknown, school selection, isolation and the implications for their grades. Generally, student teachers expressed anxiety about the risks of participating in a marginal "experiment" (Chadbourne, 1995).

The following vignette of a failed teacher-student relationship provides an interesting example of the way in which attempts to create more equitable partnerships may be subverted by deeply inscribed habits of mind that characterise traditional relations between experienced teachers and novices:

*Dale and Shirley*

*Dale was a mature age student of strong character who teamed up with Shirley, the most experienced teacher in the project. Shirley had taught in her school for many years and was committed to the school's change to multi-age grouping which she saw as a solution to the adjustment problems of the many disadvantaged children in her class.*

*Initially, Dale's competence and the excellent relationship she developed with the children stood her in good stead and she and Shirley seemed to be working together as an effective team. However, as Dale became more confident in her role she began speaking out at cluster meetings about problems she perceived in the new arrangements: the fact that younger children were over-tired, for*

*example, or that the more independent learners were not being sufficiently challenged. Shirley saw this criticism as undermining the school project and became rather defensive.*

*Back in the classroom, Dale felt that Shirley began to resent her warm relationship with the children and their interest in her lessons. In the ninth week of the placement, Dale received a fairly critical progress report which she felt reflected Shirley's personal animosity and failed to acknowledge the positive things she had achieved. Despite attempts at mediation by university staff, Dale felt that the relationship had broken down to such an extent that she could not continue with the practicum and withdrew in week 10.*

*Shirley felt that this reflected Dale's inability to listen to advice or accept criticism.*

This case could be seen simply in terms of poor communication or inadequate interpersonal skills on the part of either or both participants, but it may be more productive to reflect on the way in which an instance of change allows us to observe the re-negotiation of power in professional relationships. Dale had clearly taken on as a belief the rhetoric of SBTE with its emphasis on *partnership, reciprocity* and *critical reflection*. University staff and the school principal had reiterated a policy that student teachers were to be seen as *part of the staff* and as *integral to the process of school restructuring*. Dale felt sufficiently empowered to enter openly into debate about some of the issues about which she had strong feelings and direct knowledge through her classroom experiences. Shirley, however, understood the idea of partnership in quite different terms. While she was willing to share the work of the classroom and responsibility for the children, she clearly did not see critique of the "bigger issues" of organisation and policy as part of a student's role. Criticism and advice, in her view, should proceed only from master to apprentice. Shirley's view of her own role was reinforced by the university's evaluation system which constructed her as examiner and gave the student no active role in the evaluation process.

The above story tells us something about what Fullan describes as "the problem of meaning". This refers to the "coherent sense of meaning about what educational change is for, what it is,

and how it proceeds". Such understandings are at the heart of successful reform efforts, as he explains in the following passage :

In order to achieve greater meaning for individuals, we must come to understand both the small and the big pictures. The small picture concerns the subjective meaning or lack of meaning for individuals at all levels of the educational system. Neglect of the phenomenology of change - that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended - is at the heart of the spectacular lack of success of most social reforms. It is also necessary to build and understand the big picture, because educational change after all is a sociopolitical process (1991, p.4).

In this project successful partnerships developed where there was a "shared meaning" between partners (Fullan, 1991, p.5). Positive relationships flourished where the terms of the relationship enabled both parties to benefit (Biott & Nias, 1992; O'Hair & Odell, 1994). One young man described such a partnership in interview: *You have to have respect for people. She [the cooperating teacher] had so much more experience of young children than I did. I was lucky to have more up-to-date knowledge, but I wonder how long it will be before that's all old hat? ... We really helped each other."*

### **The problem of individualism**

As educators we often like to think of ourselves as 'team players' who value cooperation. However, if we look critically at what really happens there are many institutional practices which constrain our efforts to work together. According to Hargreaves, individualism is still the most pervasive of all forms of teachers' culture. In his words, "this culture of individualism isolates teachers from their colleagues and ties them to the pressing immediacy of classroom life. In most respects, it is a seedbed of pedagogical conservatism" (1992, p.232). In contrast, Hargreaves urges educators to develop more collaborative cultures which are:

... most compatible with the interests of local curriculum development and the exercise of discretionary professional judgement. They foster and build upon qualities of openness, trust and support between teachers and their colleagues.

They capitalise on the collective expertise and endeavours of the teaching community. They acknowledge the wider dimensions of teachers' lives outside the classroom and the school, blurring the boundaries between in-school and out-of-school, public and private, professional and personal - grounding projects for development and change in a realistic and respectful appreciation of teachers' broader world views (1992, p.233).

Conservative technical approaches to teacher preparation generally conceive the practicum in terms similar to academic courses; that is, as a competitive endeavour in which the individual must demonstrate adequate or superior mastery of a specific field of knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, this emphasis worked powerfully against our efforts to form collaborative communities with an ethos of mutual support and shared critical reflection. It tended to divide student teachers and isolate them from each other. The following comment reflects this dilemma:

*I felt a sense of powerlessness as the students became totally preoccupied with getting a good grade. Nothing else seemed to matter all that much (Lecturer).*

The impending evaluation of their practicum actually caused student teachers to lose focus on what we felt were the most important aspects of their experience. As the need to demonstrate to others that they had met certain requirements and acquired certain skills became more pressing, the students were less inclined to share or to ask critical questions of themselves or others. As the students were not involved in setting their own goals or negotiating any aspects of their evaluation, they experienced a loss of the autonomy which their roles as classroom partners had given them.

### **Theorising practice**

The culture of teaching and teacher development makes a virtue of practicality, described by Goodlad as "an ethic of action and meeting immediate needs" as opposed to the "ethic of inquiry" characteristic of universities (Goodlad, 1994, p.109). The teaching practicum is usually the site at which these cultures meet and where the false dichotomy between "theory and practice" is played out in well-worn lines such as *forget all that airy-fairy stuff they teach you at uni - this is the real world*.

The notion of practicality, while providing a crucial reminder of the complex social and physical realities of teachers' work, actually operates to disempower teachers and justify oppressive working conditions that leave little time for creative and reflective thought and action (Giroux, 1985). Inglis bluntly explains the disabling consequences of such a position:

Everybody has a set of theories, compounded maybe of fact and value, history and myth, observation and folklore, superstition and convention, but these theories are nonetheless intended to explain the world and... discover and confirm its meanings. Most of all those who refuse all theory, who speak of themselves as plain, practical people, and virtuous in virtue of having no theory, are in the grip of theories which manacle them and keep them immobile, because they have no way of thinking about them and therefore of taking them off. They aren't theory-free; they are stupid theorists (Inglis, 1985, p 40).

Traditional training-oriented models of teacher education tend to privilege action and "skills" over theory, while universities emphasise abstraction and relegate practical enquiry to a lower status (Zeichner, 1994). Our experience of SBTE caused us to explore such moments more fully and to question the separation of thought and action in teacher education programs. We wanted to encourage in our students a habit of mind which is probably best described by Shon (1983) as "reflection in action", a phrase which emphasises the complex, critical and purposive nature of teaching, but recognises that it is never a purely cerebral activity. We thus sought to build into the SBTE project an integrated approach to course content, developing assignments, case studies and projects out of the authentic issues and problems that the students were confronting in their daily work. In so doing, we wanted to develop what Giroux and Mc Laren describe as the "intellectual work" of teachers. According to them, this means that teachers become:

... bearers of critical knowledge, rules and values through which they consciously articulate and problematize their relationship to each other, to students, to subject matter, and to the wider community. This view of authority exposes and challenges the dominant view of teachers as primarily technicians or public servants whose role is to implement rather than to conceptualize pedagogical practice (Giroux, 1986, pp.225-226).

In practice such aspirations proved difficult to realise, bringing into focus once again the ways in which the institutional culture of both schools and universities can work against efforts to develop more open and self critical ways of working together. Comments recorded in interviews with a school principal and a university lecturer illustrate the nature of the problem from different perspectives:

*Something none of us actually do - including myself - is stop, sit down listen and think. We don't reflect on what we do, not really. ... There are very few teachers who could be good role models of that attitude. It's not something that we value. We always find excuses not to do it. Maybe it's something we need to look at (Principal).*

*I wasn't happy "handing over" to the teacher. This was because the teacher was an experienced practitioner, but lacked the conceptual knowledge and access to reading that I felt the student teachers needed at this stage of their development. I don't want them to have a problem-solving checklist - I want them to have working theories so they can respond thoughtfully to whatever the situation throws at them (Lecturer).*

These comments indicate that partners need to feel confident of each others knowledge and skills in order for genuine partnerships to develop. Nonetheless, there were notable successes in this aspect of the SBTE project, and certainly all participants were aware of its positive potential in terms of linking theory and practice. All students agreed that the site-based project had provided a more powerful learning experience than the decontextualised coursework often found at university. One student summarised this in terms of personal professional enquiry: *You came back to University with a different perspective because you'd tested out some of the theory. ... I always came back with lots of questions, real questions.*

Peter's case is a good example of the way in which negotiated coursework, and collaboration at different levels, can contribute to more positive outcomes for all participants, including the children:

*Peter*

*Seven weeks into the practicum Peter presented the school-based tutorial group with a problem, seeking our views and advice. He felt that while the multi-age classroom in which he was placed was offering the children a great deal in terms of social adjustment, the academic needs of the most disadvantaged children were not being adequately met. He wanted to address the issue positively, yet diplomatically, given the big investment in the school project by the teachers and principal.*

*The group focused on the area of emergent literacy and Peter described what he saw as the most pressing needs of his class. We decided that it would be valuable to adapt one of the Language unit assignments to enable Peter to develop, implement and evaluate a special program for the group of children that he and the teacher identified as being most at risk. The lecturer was able to direct Peter to specific readings and resources that would be helpful to him in this task, as well as working directly with him in teaching and monitoring this small group.*

Such collaborative efforts benefited the children, the university lecturer (who valued the opportunity to test and modify her ideas in a real context), the student teacher and his peers with whom he was able to share his developing knowledge. Collaboration of this nature is very different from the closed transaction between individual students and lecturers so characteristic of much university teaching. This collaborative, problem-solving approach evolved naturally out of our joint efforts to explore and address authentic issues arising out of the lived experience of children and teachers in a particular context.

Peter's story and the many other valuable learning experiences that we gained from the SBTE project have helped us to refine and focus our understanding of how beginning teachers construct their knowledge about teaching. In undertaking this reform effort we found it necessary to develop a language of critique that was quite different from the technical, competency-based language to which students, teachers and teacher educators had become so accustomed. These emerging critical discourses have provided all participants in the project with some new and exciting ways of examining their own personal practical theories on teaching and learning. Importantly, it has provided participants with an opportunity to appreciate the broader socio-political context in which teaching and learning takes place.



Significantly, we have also learned a great deal about the nature of educational change itself: that it takes time, commitment and trust to develop new ways of working together, but that these new partnerships are absolutely fundamental to creating contexts in which the critical intellectual work of teacher professional development can take place (Hargreaves 1994, p.260).

### **Implications for the future**

Evaluating our shared experiences of SBTE has opened up a range of issues which we will explore together as we refine and develop the principles and processes underpinning our approach to SBTE. Involvement in this project reinforces our belief that the process of collaborative critique or "researched action" can significantly improve the likelihood of genuinely transformative and sustainable change (Tripp 1993). The SBTE project provided us with a number of important insights:

- All participants need to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of SBTE. This does not mean uniformity of views, but it should mean an informed acceptance of fundamental principles such as partnership, negotiation, and reflective practice. To develop these principles is to "reculture" the school and university to create collaborative cultures among teachers and the wider community (Hargreaves, 1995; and Smyth, 1995).
- More time and more flexible work organisation are needed to allow participants to discuss and negotiate the content, pedagogy and evaluation of SBTE. University staff, teachers, administrators and student teachers should be involved in the negotiation and should have some ownership of its outcomes. There are implications here also for teacher educators who must demonstrate a greater consistency between what they say and what they do.
- Opportunities for critical reflection, analysis and action need to be built into the SBTE program for all participants, not just for student teachers. We need to work together to create the conditions under which this critical intellectual work can be done, work which entails "moving outside the assumptions and practices of the existing order... (to make) categories, assumptions and practices of everyday life ... problematic" (Popkewitz, 1987).

- The professional status of teaching needs to be recognised and enhanced. In terms of SBTE this can be achieved through collaborative professional development initiatives and some formal recognition of teachers' roles in the preparation of their prospective colleagues.
- Successful educational change requires a sense of what Hargreaves calls "positive politics" whereby power is used with other people rather than over them. This involves understanding the political configuration of schools and universities; acting politically to secure support and resources for the good of students; empowering others to be more competent; embracing conflict as a necessary part of change; and reclaiming the discourse of education (Hargreaves, 1995).
- The stories of individual participants often reveal a very different perspective from that constructed by educational institutions. These stories are important in helping teachers, student teachers and academics understand the complex historical, cultural and political forms that they embody and produce (Giroux, 1985, p.39). Significantly, they enable us to develop "a shared understanding of the social construction of reality" and the potential for transformative action (Livingstone, 1987, p. 8).

## **Conclusion**

In attempting this relatively minor interruption to the institutional narrative on teacher training, we found it necessary to develop alternative ways of theorising our work; ways which are quite different from the technical, competency-based approaches to which most students, teachers and teacher educators have become so accustomed. We found that the emerging critical discourses on teacher education provided us not only with the tools to critique the dominant training approach but offered a framework for rethinking our own work. For us, the current SBTE project provides an opportunity to engage in developing a more complex, open-ended story on teacher education. This promises to be a story characterised by multiple voices and perspectives, a story in which themes emerge and meanings are explored and interpreted by groups of educators working in genuine partnership. We hope it will prove to be a story which refuses to adopt a voice of authority but rather invites participation, sharing, critical thinking and imagination.

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